

Appl. No. : 10/042,128  
Filed : January 7, 2002

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**Please amend the claims as follows:**

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~1~~ 4 including mounting said membranes relative to one another so as to produce a rubbing effect between said membranes when vibrated.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Currently amended) ~~A method according to claim 3~~ A method of removing fouling materials from the surface of a plurality of porous membranes arranged in a membrane module the porous membranes forming an array, the module having a header in which one end of each of the membranes is mounted, the header connected to a source of pressurized gas, the method comprising providing, through a plurality of holes distributed throughout the header but not through the pores of said membranes, gas bubbles in a uniform distribution relative to the porous membrane array such that said bubbles move past the surfaces of and vibrate said membranes to dislodge fouling materials therefrom, said membranes being arranged in close proximity to one another and mounted to prevent excessive movement therebetween, wherein said plurality of holes is not solely peripheral to the distribution of said membranes in said header, wherein the porous membranes comprise hollow fibre membranes, wherein the fibre membranes are arranged in bundles surrounded by a perforated cage which serves to prevent said excessive movement therebetween.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~1~~ 4 including the step of providing gas bubbles from within the module by means of at least one porous tube located within the module.
7. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~1~~ 4 including the step of providing gas bubbles from within the module by means of a tube or tubes positioned to output gas within the module.
8. (Original) A method according to claim 7 wherein the tubes are in the form of a comb of tubes containing holes which are located within the module.

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9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently amended) A membrane module according to claim ~~9~~ 12 wherein said porous membranes are mounted relative to one another so as to produce a rubbing effect between said membranes when vibrated.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently amended) ~~A membrane module according to claim 11~~ A membrane module comprising a plurality of porous membranes, said membranes being arranged in close proximity to one another and mounted to prevent excessive movement therebetween, the membranes forming an array, the module having a header in which one end of each of the membranes is mounted, the header connected to a source of pressurized gas so as to permit formation of gas bubbles such that, in use, said gas moves through a plurality of holes distributed throughout said header but not through the pores of said membranes, and said bubbles move past the surfaces of and vibrate said membranes to dislodge fouling materials therefrom, wherein said plurality of holes is not solely peripheral to the distribution of said membranes in said header, wherein the porous membranes comprise hollow fibre membranes, wherein the fibre membranes are arranged in bundles surrounded by a perforated cage which serves to prevent said excessive movement therebetween.

13-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently amended) A membrane module according to claim ~~9~~ 12 wherein the membranes comprise porous hollow fibres, the fibres being fixed at each end in a header, a lower header having a plurality of holes formed therein through which gas is introduced to provide the gas bubbles.

20. (Previously presented) A membrane module according to claim 19 wherein the fibres are sealed at a lower end and open at an upper end to allow removal of filtrate.

21. (Original) A membrane module according to claim 19 wherein the fibres are mounted in a substantially taut manner between said headers.

22-34. (Cancelled)